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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: NORTH KOREA, U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused September 15 news coverage on the captain of a Taiwan navy submarine being swept overboard during a mission; on the confrontation between Taiwan and Japan vessels over a Taiwan fishing boat's alleged intrusion into Japanese waters; on the H1N1 epidemic in Taiwan; and on Premier Wu Den-yih's meeting with Hong Kong politician Leung Chun-ying during Wu's trip to Hong Kong before Wu assumed the premiership.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" commented on the United States' recent decision to hold bilateral talks with North Korea. The column interpreted the development, saying that it was an indication that the United States has yielded to North Korea. The development has also made South Korea uneasy, the column said. Regarding relations between China and the United States, another commentary in the "China Times" said the idea that China and the United States form a "G2" is unlikely, because neither the United States nor China is willing or interested in pushing forward such an idea to make it come true. End summary.

¶3. "North Korea"

"The United States Holds Talks with North Korea, South Korea Does Not Relish [the idea]"

The "International Lookout" column in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] wrote (9/15):

"United States Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs Philip Crowley said that the United States will have contact with North Korea and persuade North Korea to return to the six-party talks; even the possibility of United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meeting with North Korean diplomats at the United Nations is not ruled out.

"What matters is that he [Crowley] said, 'any talks that we have with North Korea will be held within the six-party context.' Such phrasing is different from that in the past. In the past, the United States' said that [the bilateral talks] would be held within the six-party 'framework.' Now, they [the bilateral talks] will be held within the six-party 'context.' If [the bilateral talks] are held within the [six-party] framework, the two parties [the United States and North Korea] must follow the rules set during the six-party talks and inform other parties what occurred during the [bilateral] talks. However, [if the bilateral talks] are held within the [six-party] context, the two parties can make decisions on their own and it is not a necessity that other countries be informed.

"These circumstances reveal two things. First, the level of contact by the two countries has risen to the level of ministers of foreign affairs. Second, as long as the label of six-party talks is not withheld from them, [the two countries] can hold talks at their own desire.

"If one says that this is not a concession by the United States [to North Korea], no one will believe it. However, why was the Obama administration eager to make concessions? The answer is clear judging from common sense, which is that time is on North Korea's side. The longer the procrastination, the more powerful North Korea's nuclear capability becomes and the fewer bargaining chips the United States has. Now, to take advantage of North Korea's show of goodwill, Washington needs to make progress. Moreover, domestic support in the United States for Obama's foreign policy still exists. In the future, if such support decreases in tandem with the decline of [President Barack Obama's] reputation, it will be more difficult to hold [bilateral] negotiations.

"South Korean's conservative newspaper 'JoongAng Daily' pointed out that even if bilateral talks [between the United States and North Korea] are held, such talks would just be an old-style, boring [fight] between defense and attack with no promising prospects. Such a tone fully shows that South Korea deeply fears that the United States would make progress with North Korea and abandon South Korea. Why does [South Korea] assert that North Korea would still perform 'in the old way?' Why does [South Korea] assert that such [bilateral] talks would be boring? North Korea has recently shown consistent goodwill to the United States with clear measures very different from those in the past. What's more, would the United States Secretary of State be willing to go into battle only to do boring things?"

14. "U.S.-China Relations"

"G2, An Expectation Difficult to Realize and an Unnecessary Source of Worry"

Jia Qingguo, the Associate Dean of the School of International Studies (SIS) at Peking University, wrote in the KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 120,000] (9/15):

"... If one carefully analyzes the possibility of China and the United States forming a G2 in the foreseeable future, one can easily see that there is no need either to expect or worry about a G2. Under the current circumstances, the possibility of a G2 forming in the foreseeable future is remote. Neither China nor the United States have the willingness or the prerequisites to advance a so-called G2.

"First, the United States does not have the willingness to advance a G2. Fundamentally speaking, deep down in their hearts, most Americans do not regard China as a partner which has common goals and is able to cooperate with [the United States] in the long run. Some Americans look at China as a competitor. They believe that the relationship between China and the United States is a relationship between a hegemonic country and a rising country. There are more Americans who regard China as a country which holds different values [from that of the United States]. They do not believe that China and the United States can work together...without common values....The United States once had debates about whether to invite China to join the G8. Most people believed then that it should not happen because China is not a so-called democratic country. ...

"China does not have the willingness to advance a G2 either. Fundamentally speaking, deep down in their hearts, most Chinese people not only do not believe that China has risen, but also do not believe that China is able to lead in global issues and take international responsibility in a broad sense....Some Chinese people regard the United States as a threat to China's peaceful development and believe that it is impossible for the United States, as a hegemonic country, to do nothing and merely sit by and watch China's rise.

"To most Chinese people, China is still a developing country. China still faces many challenges during the process of domestic reform and development. Before these issues and challenges are properly managed and solved, it is neither possible for China to -- nor should China -- excessively care about international issues, especially in terms of taking on too many international responsibilities. ..."

STANTON